

USING LIBRARIES IN WINDOWS 7

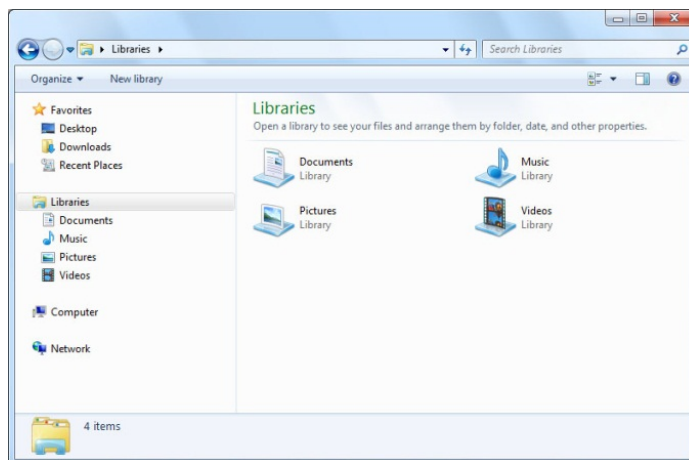
With the release of Windows 7, users have a new tool for managing files on their computers—Libraries. Previous versions of Microsoft Windows (i.e. Vista, XP, etc.) included what are called “known folders” for organizing specific types of content. The main known folder in previous versions of Microsoft Windows was the ‘My Documents’ folder. For instance, if you created and saved a document in a program like Word or Excel, Windows would default to the My Documents folder as the save location (note: there were other known folders as well, including the My Pictures and My Music folders, which were intended as the save locations for picture and music files respectively).

If you’re familiar with older versions of Windows, don’t fret. The My Documents folder still exists. Conversely, if you’re new to Windows and the wonderful world of computers, don’t fret. You do not need to understand how known folders worked in earlier versions of Windows to understand their function in Windows 7. This tip sheet will hopefully explain all.

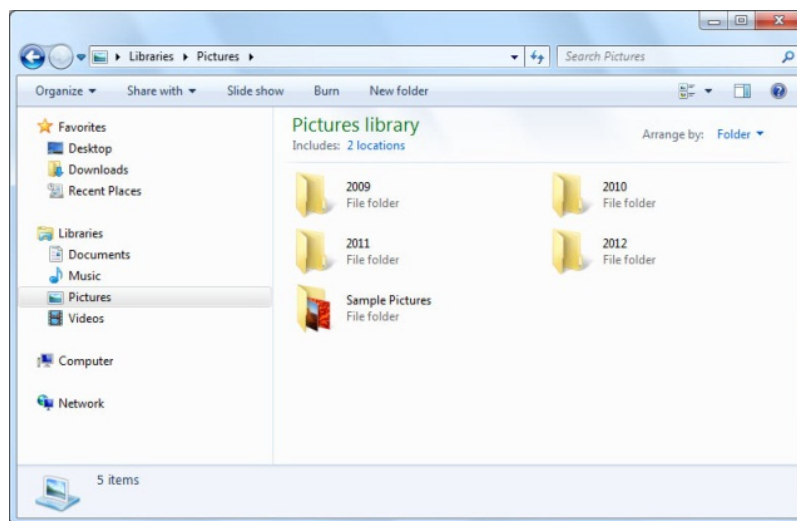
Let’s begin by discussing Libraries. When you click the Windows Explorer icon on your Taskbar (pictured to the right), you will open Windows Explorer. By default, the four Libraries will be displayed: Documents, Music, Pictures, and Video. Libraries take the place of known folders and, as such, are the default save locations for documents, music files, image files, and videos. In that sense, you can either save files to the Libraries, or you can create sub-folders within the Libraries and organize your files that way (see the tip sheet on ‘File Management’ for more information). But there’s a lot more to Libraries than that. The main thing to remember is that the subfolders are not stored in the Library; the Library is more like a portal via which you can view specific subfolders. Confused? Don’t be. An example should serve to clarify the way that Libraries work.



Let’s assume we have a digital camera and save our pictures on our computer. The path of least resistance would be save these photos in the Pictures Library. Go ahead and open Windows Explorer; you will be looking at the four Libraries (see the image to the right). Double-click on the Pictures Library. If your computer is new and you haven’t saved any images previously, you will now be looking at one folder labeled ‘Sample Pictures’.



Now let’s assume we’ve taken a number of pictures over the years, and we want to save these pictures on our computer in some sort of organized fashion. We create folders labeled by year, e.g. 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012. Now the Pictures Library contains five folders—the Sample Pictures folder plus four folders for the years 2009-2012 (see the image to the right). Now we can move/save pictures to the appropriate folder, thus imposing a sense of organization on our Pictures Library.



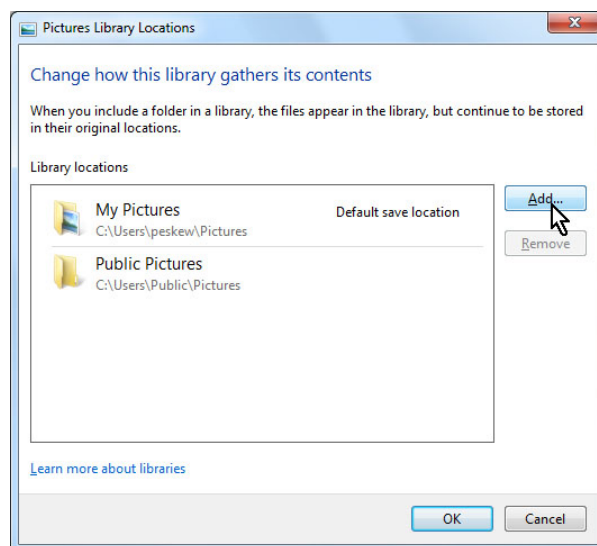
So far, it’s pretty straight forward, but now let’s assume that that we have a folder in the Documents Library labeled ‘Novel’ where we’re keeping the documents related to our novel-in-progress. Inside of this folder is another folder labeled ‘Images’, where we’re saving images and pictures that we hope to incorporate into our novel (perhaps maps, possible cover art, etc.).

The thing is, you now have two locations where images are stored—the Pictures Library and the folder of images in your Novel folder, which is accessible through the Documents Library. This is where the magic of Libraries comes into play.

Go back to the Pictures Library. Notice that just below the words 'Pictures library' is text that reads: "Includes: 2 locations". Go ahead and click the "2 locations" link. A new window will open that displays all of the locations currently set to display within the Pictures Library—i.e. the 'My Pictures' folder and the 'Public Pictures' folder.

In the window that just opened, click the "Add" button (see the image to the right). We would now navigate to the aforementioned 'Images' folder (just as we would if we were attaching a file to an email), select it, and click the "OK" button. This will add the 'Images' folder to the list of folders that are displayed when we open the Pictures Library, i.e. the Pictures Library now includes three locations instead of two.

It should be emphasized that we didn't *move* the pictures, we just made them visible in the Pictures Library. Again, the Libraries are *not* locations; they access points that allow us to view the contents of multiple folders in one spot.



As if being able to access and browse all of your images in one spot isn't cool enough (and remember, you can do the same thing with you document, music, and video files), there are some nifty file management options available in Libraries. Open up one of your Libraries in Windows Explorer. Do you see the "Arrange by:" option near the top right corner of the window? By default, your Libraries are arranged by folder, but you can click the dropdown menu next to "Arrange by:" and choose to arrange you images by Month, Day, Rating, or Tag:

- **"Month"** and **"Day"** refer to the date when the image was created. If you sort files by month or day, Windows will display them in chronological order from most to least recent. Note: If you took pictures with a digital camera, the camera embeds the creation date in the file. If you scanned the photos using a flatbed scanner, the creation date will be the date of the scan.
- **"Rating"** refers to the ability users have in Windows to rate files. Users can rate a file using a five-star system. For example, display the files in a folder (or Library) in Windows Explorer, click *one time* on the file you want to rate. Along the bottom edge of the window you'll see where you can add information about the file in question including a rating. If you choose "Arrange by: Rating", Windows will display all of the files in the folder from highest to lowest rating.
- **"Tag"** refers to the ability users have to label files with keywords. If you sort files by tag, Windows will display them in alpha-numeric order by tag (numbers one to infinity first, then words A-Z). If your files have multiple tags, they will be listed once for each corresponding tag. Like ratings, you can tag a file by displaying it in Windows Explorer, clicking on it one time, and then typing in your tags separated by semicolons in the space along the bottom of the window.

If you do this in the Music Library, your options are to arrange by Folder, Album, Artist, Song, Genre, and Rating (note: you rate music files in Windows Media Player—not Windows Explorer). If you do this in the Documents Library, your options are to arrange by Folder, Author, Date modified, Tag, Type (of file), and Name (of file).

Creating Libraries

Not only do you have the four default Libraries (Documents, Music, Pictures, Video), you can create your own Library. For example, if you run a small business and have multiple work-related documents in different folders, you could create a Work Library. You could even create specialized Music or Photo Libraries—for example, a Beatles Library that only contains the folders with Beatles songs and information (e.g. music files, images, documents with lyrics and chord charts, etc.).

To create a Library, open Windows Explorer. You should default to a view that displays your existing Libraries. On the toolbar above the Library icons, you should see an option that reads "New library" (see the image to the right). Click this button, name your Library, and you're on your way. While it's a bit beyond the scope of this tip sheet, you can find instructions on the Internet for changing the icon for your new Library.

